

## Little Hucklow : Its Customs and Old Houses.

By S. O. ADDY.



THE village of Little Hucklow, in the parish of Hope, is about midway between Bradwell and Tideswell. According to the six-inch Ordnance Survey, the ground on which the houses and their gardens stand embraces an area of rather more than seven acres. The houses are few, and are mostly built on the north and south sides of a piece of open land, which answers both for road and village green, and is called the Town Gate. The middle of this open land has been encroached on by a Sunday School, now used as a Dissenters' Chapel, built in 1854, and the owners of the various tenements have from time to time enclosed bits of the green to enlarge their homesteads. But some of the houses still abut on this open space. The road by which the houses stand goes from east to west up the hill to the top of the village, whence it still ascends in the direction of Peak Forest. Parallel to the road on the south side is a back lane, and between this lane and the road are the crofts of the houses, most of which are on the south side, and have a southern aspect. The village is nearly a thousand feet above the level of the sea, yet it is so sheltered from the prevailing wind that a crop of wheat, tall, strong, and golden, may be seen, as I am now writing, at this height. But if shelter from the wind is an advantage, the lack of water more than countervails it. Old people remember how the lads and lasses used to fetch water in the evening from a place called the

Sinings (the first "i" is long), half a mile from the village. They carried it on their heads in large *burn-cans*,\* which had a ring on the top and a handle at the side, their heads being padded with neatly-made round cushions, hollow in the middle like a quoit.

A sycamore, an elm or two, or a mountain ash grow near one or two of the homesteads, but there is hardly a tree in the fields to protect the cattle from the heat and rain. The moorland air is fresh and cool; the short, green turf springs under the feet, and there is no better pasturage for sheep and cattle. A novelist might call the place Grey Walls. The grey limestone fences that surround the narrow enclosures are very numerous, and the building of them must have been costly, for they cover the green sward for miles together like patchwork on an old bed-quilt. On a bank near Windmill, looking to the south, a number of terraces, here called *lenches*, rise one above another, as if frequent ploughing had thrown the earth down the hill. Some of the enclosures near the village are long strips placed at right angles to each other. In these *lenches* and strips we have the remains of the ancient open-field husbandry. The homesteads of the village adjoined the unenclosed moorland on the west, whence the inhabitants fetched heath to light their fires. They call this heath "kindling," and a handful of it is enough to set a fire going, without using paper, the roots being turned upwards and the match applied to the flowers or leaves. You may still see a woman dragging a great bundle of kindling with a rope for a mile or more.

The early settlers came here to dig for veins of lead, not to stub up heather and furze to make good land. This metal has been worked in the village beyond historic memory, and the discontinuance of lead-mining is said to be due not to the exhaustion of the mines, but to foreign competition, tithes, and manorial dues. The cessation of this industry has been followed by the decay of the village; nearly a third of the

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\* *Burn* is used dialectically as a shortened form of *burden*.

houses are unoccupied and ruinous, and the old men and women look back with regret to the days of their youth and manhood when, as lead-miners and little freeholders, they worked short hours in the mines, kept a cow or two each, and were as happy as the day is long.

For more than two centuries the number of houses in the township has remained stationary. When the hearth-tax was imposed between 1663 and 1689 there were fifty houses, and the inhabitants of eight of them "paid to church and poor." Of these eight persons half were Poyntons—viz., Adam Poynton, whose name occurs first in the list, and who was probably the owner of the house which I shall describe further on; and Ellis, William, and Edward Poynton. Only four persons—viz., Adam Poynton, Adam Furniss, Rowland Smith, and Willow Alleyn, had as many as two hearths each.\* In 1851 there were 49 houses and 235 inhabitants.† In the present year (1905) there are 49 houses, of which 15 are unoccupied, and 105 inhabitants.‡

No distinction is made in *Domesday* between Great and Little Hucklow, the former being locally known as Big Hucklow. The word Hucklow (in *Domesday* Hochelai, and in the *Hundred Rolls* Hokelawe) means the burial-mound of Hoca, and the older form of the word would have been *Hocan-hlāw*. Hoca, or Hocca, is a man's name, and Mr. Searle gives five examples of it in his *Onomasticon*.

There are indications that the village had an organized community of landowners at an early time. There was an officer called the headborough,§ known at a later time as the constable, and he, according to some, held two pieces of land, by way of salary, so long as he retained his office. These "headborough lands" lie in different parts of the township, and

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\* From information kindly supplied by Miss Lega-Weekes.

† White's *Gazetteer of the County of Derby*, 1857, p. 629.

‡ Information kindly supplied by Mr. Martin Chapman, Assistant Overseer.

§ In 1833 the neighbouring township of Abney was "governed by a headborough."—Glover's *History of Derbyshire*, ii., p. 3.

are otherwise known as Brockdale and Withered Bush. They are held in eleven undivided shares, six of which have become the property of one landowner, and there seems to be no reason why all the shares should not ultimately become the property of one man. For a long time past the shareholders have held the headborough lands in turn, usually for more than a year each. This periodical holding of land has been found to be very inconvenient, for the tenant for the time being could plough up and exhaust it, leaving it in a bad condition for his successor. Others say that these lands were left to the poor by an old woman whose name they do not remember. It seems to be very likely that the eleven landowners, or the owners for the time being of the eleven ancient messuages which may have composed the township, took the office of headborough in turn, and received payment in this way. We are reminded of the "town hams" in the Aston village community, such as the Constable's Ham, the Smith's Ham, the Water Steward's Ham, and so forth.\* In 1903, the Charity Commissioners gave notice that the trustees of "the charity called the Constable Land," containing 1a. or. 20p., at Wentworth, in the parish of Wath-upon-Dearne, proposed to sell it. It is a mistake to call such properties charities; as well might the wastes and commons of a township be so described. They belong not to charities, but to the landowners of a township. I am told that at Treharris, in Glamorganshire, is a piece of land which belongs to the burgesses, and is divided into a certain number of shares; when a shareholder dies, the next oldest burgess takes his share.

Formerly the herbage by the road sides was let by candle to the highest bidder, and the money went to the overseers or township. There is a saying in the village that a yard of land is worth a pint of ale. In the county of Cavan, in Ireland, land was formerly measured by pints of six and a quarter acres, pottles of twelve and a half acres, and so on.†

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\* Gomme's *Village Community*, p. 163.

† O'Curry's *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, i., p. xlv.



Now and then one hears a curious saying in the village, as "We shall all be on a level when we get into a bed without a pillow." An old inhabitant can remember that his father had a cart drawn by a bull. The bull used to lie down in the cart shafts when he was tired. As soon as the cows were milked, one of the milkers went round with an "aftering-can," into which the last drops were pressed from the udders. This was regarded as the best milk.

A rope is tied across the road to impede the progress of a wedding party and make the bridegroom pay something. This is also done at Castleton, Bradwell, Edale, and Bamford. At Castleton a hay rope was used, and the bridegroom and bride had to jump over it. On the 6th of September, 1901, I saw a newly-married pair returning to Castleton after their honeymoon. A rope was tied across the road, the bells were rung, and people came out of their houses to throw rice at them.\*

Sods were thrown at the bride and bridegroom at Castleton. People kicked these up with their feet or pulled them up with their hands in the churchyard. Horse-beans and hen-beans are still thrown by the farmers at Castleton, and these often hurt or cut the face. I have heard people say that sods mean luck in the produce of the earth, shoes plenty of clothes, and rice plenty of children. In some places they now throw bits of paper instead of rice.

At weddings they had bunches of ribbons tied into love-knots, the men wearing theirs on their hats. On the morning after a wedding the neighbours came into the bedroom where the bride and bridegroom lay and pelted them with anything they could lay their hands on, such as brooms or clothes-brushes.

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\* At New Mills, in Lancashire, the bride and bridegroom paid a fine called "pass money" on coming out of church, the gate being fastened until payment. In Livonia the bridegroom held in his hand "a stick cleft at the upper end, where he puts a piece of brass money, which is given as a reward to the person who opens the wicket, through which he passes."—Scheffer's *History of Lapland*, ed. 1704, p. 399. Is not this English custom a survival of the old *merchet* or fine paid on the marriage of a daughter?

On Shrove Tuesday the one who remained last in bed was called the "bed-churl," or "bed-churn,"\* and was swept with a broom. An old woman describing this custom to me said that she was once a bed-churl, and "he kept sweeping me with his broom, and I kept skriking" (shrieking). To avoid being made bed-churls people have been known to stay up all night. On this day the miner who came last to his work had a pole or stake put under his legs, on which he was carried and "tipped down th' hillock." A miner who was being treated in this way once stabbed his persecutor with a knife.

On New Year's Day a "barm-feast" was held in a barn.

There is a spring on the hill to the east of the village called Silver Well, into which, both on Easter Sunday and Easter Monday, children threw pins, and then poured water from the well into bottles containing broken sweetmeats, and shook the bottles. A Methodist preacher who had asked a boy what happened on Easter Sunday was told "we shakken." At Chapel-en-le-Frith and at Doveholes, near Buxton, the process of filling the bottles with water and shaking them is called "rinsing," and Easter Sunday is called "Rinsing Day." This shows that the putting of sweetmeats into bottles is a modern addition to the rite, the object of the shaking having been to cleanse or purify. At Tideswell they call the practice "Sugar-cupping."† On Palm Sunday—the Sunday before Easter—they laid a ring of "palms"—*i.e.*, the buds or catkins of the common willow (*salix cinerea*)—round Silver Well, using no other flowers.‡ There are other wells called pin wells in the neighbourhood.

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\* *Bed-churn* is more frequently heard than *bed-churl*, but I think the latter is right.

† It is so described in a letter from Tideswell, dated 1826, printed in Hone's *Every-day Book*, ii., 451.

‡ Horace mentions the custom of offering flowers to springs:—

O fons Bandusiæ, splendidior vitro,  
Dulci digne mero non sine floribus.

In Rochdale, Lancashire, Spaw Sunday was celebrated on the first that fell in May, "when the devout, provided with what were called *spawen-bottles*, betook themselves for the most part to a well called Brown Wardle."—March's *Nomenclature of East Lancashire*, p. 27. Here *spaw* is the O.N. *spā*, prophecy, divination, and a *spawen-bottle* is a divining bottle.

On Easter Monday the men "cucked up," or lifted, the women; and the women cucked up the men on the next day, when they could. One of my informants remembers a man lying flat on the ground, defying the women to cuckold him. This practice seems originally to have been a magical rite for the purpose of making the crops spring up, according to the well-known ancient belief that like actions produce like. If you imitate the rise of the crops from the earth by jumping or lifting people up, you will make them grow.

The act of gathering the last wisp of hay or straw from a corner of the field was called the "hare-catching." The last wisp was supposed to be caught like a hare and put into the barn.

The wakes begin on the second Sunday in September, and last a week. On Wake Eve all kinds of mischief were indulged in. Gates were lifted off their hinges, "they took all loose things, such as brooms," and they "bowled th' carts down into th' watter"—*i.e.*, into the wet place at the Sinings. It is curious that the same thing should have been done at Bradwell, two miles off, where they dragged their neighbours' carts into the stream at the bottom of the hill. They speak of "holding up"—*i.e.*, maintaining—the wakes.

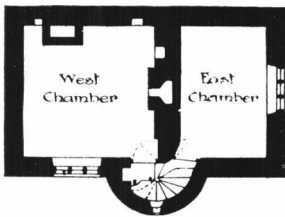
They had a game called "pin-play" or "pin-holes." A hole was made in the ground, and each player laid a pin or two in, the pins being so arranged as to form a circle with a hole in the middle. He or she who could bowl a marble into the centre of the hole got a pin.

A woman in the village bore the singular Christian name of Pennina.

Two of the houses in the village are worth describing, as they contain points of interest rarely to be found elsewhere.

#### I.—THE DIVIDED HOUSE.

The first of these is a building in the form of the letter T, standing in the Town Gate. This building now contains three dwelling-houses, which have been distinguished from each



Chamber Plan

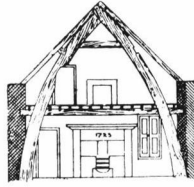
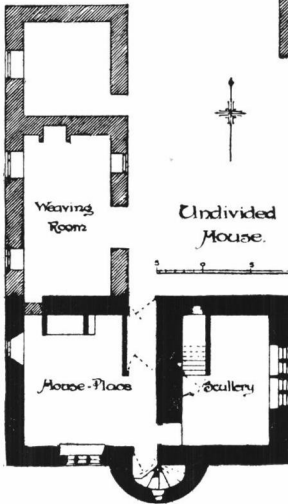
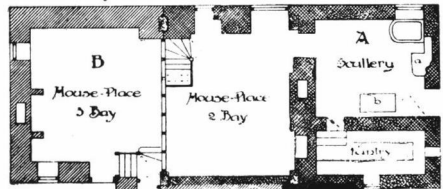


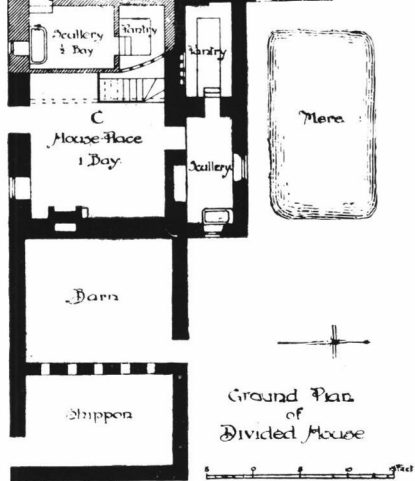
Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Ground Plan



Ground Plan of Divided Mouse

PLANS AND SECTIONS OF HOUSES AT LITTLE HUCKLOW.

other by the letters A, B, and C on the plan, and by a difference in shading, so that the reader can see the whole arrangement at a glance. The building is ruinous, and only the house marked "B" is now occupied. These three dwelling-houses have been formed by alterations and additions out of one house or original nucleus, which consisted of three bays and a half of "housing," marked respectively 1, 2, 3, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  on the plan.

The original house or nucleus can be readily distinguished from the alterations and additions, not only by the appearance of the walls themselves and the ashlar corner-stones of the original structure, but by the bays of that structure. It is now well ascertained that houses were usually built in bays, presumably of uniform size, buildings being described by surveyors as consisting of so many bays, including half-bays.\* The bays are usually, but not always, separated from each other by pairs of "crucks," crutches (Lat. *furca*) or principal timbers,† which rested on stones placed near the ground, and extended from them to the ridge-piece, the partition walls between them being made of a framework of wooden beams, laths, and plaster. Two pairs of these "crucks" are yet *in situ* in the building which we are considering, and one of the pairs is represented in fig. 1. The stones on which the "crucks" rest are here buried in the ground, and are not shown in the drawing.

The existence of such "crucks" implies the existence of bays, and if we measure the bay numbered 2 in the house marked "A" we shall find that it is approximately sixteen feet in breadth by fifteen feet in length. In such measurements we must allow for error in the work of the old builders, and for the fact that in such houses the present external walls are rarely the original walls. In most cases wood and plaster walls have been replaced by stonework.

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\* See my *Evolution of the English House*, p. 32 *seqq.*, and *Notes and Queries*, 9th S., vi., 461.

† The Anglo-Saxon word for such a beam may have been *feor-studu* (far beam?) which occurs in a vocabulary of the tenth or eleventh century, and renders the Lat. *obstupum* (for *obstipum*) an inclined post.—See the Wright-Wülcker Vocab., 281, 10, and 461, 3.

It will be seen that the size of the bay numbered 1 conforms very nearly to the size of the bays numbered 2 and 3, and that the half-bay, numbered  $\frac{1}{2}$ , is approximately a moiety of the full bay which it adjoins. In these  $3\frac{1}{2}$  bays we get, as I have said, the whole of the original building. The barn and "shippon"\* at the east end of the house marked "C" are not so old as the house itself, though they may have replaced older outbuildings upon the same site.

I have elsewhere tried to show that the bay of an English peasant's house was a space of  $15 \times 16 = 240$  square feet, and it will be noticed how near the bays of the building which I am now describing come to this rule. It is obvious that such a rule, if firmly established, would be very useful in enabling us to distinguish the older parts of similar houses from later additions. And, in the days when houses were divided piecemeal between children and wives, uniformity in the area of bays would have been of great service—indeed, equality of partition would have been almost impossible without it.

Turning now to the house marked "A," it will be seen from the plan that it is bounded on the south by a frail wooden partition which goes from the roof to the floor. It is bounded on the west by another man's land, on the north by the village green, and on the east by the houses marked "B" and "C," which belong to another person. Thus we have here the singular fact that the owner of the house marked "A" has not an inch of land adjoining it, except so far as he may claim a share in the green on which the end of his house abuts. On every side he is hemmed in by his neighbour's property. In a word, the owner of this house has no *privilege*—a term to which I shall refer again. There is a concealed tank or well on the green in front of the door, but no garden, outbuilding, or outside accommodation of any kind on the land surrounding the house. And yet this house, when occupied, was a farmhouse! It contains on the ground floor a scullery with a bakestone (*a*) and a large cheese-press (*b*), a pantry, or dairy,

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\* Anglo-Saxon *scipen*, a stall or fold for cattle.

surrounded by milk benches, and a house-place, in which is a wooden staircase later in date than the rest of the building. Over the fireplace is the date 1723 (fig. 1); but the building is older than that, and the fireplace was put there when the original house was divided. On the upper floor are two bedrooms, and there has been a fireplace in the room over the house-place (fig. 1), the fireplaces of both rooms being served by the same chimney. The owner of this remarkable farmhouse has a shippin, or cow-house, big enough to hold four cows, about seventy yards off on the other side of the green, with a pigsty and privy annexed, but no land adjoining these outbuildings. He has also a little more than five acres of old enclosure in different parts of the township, one of the fields containing "lenches," and five or six acres which were formerly common land, and allotted in respect of rights of common.

If we ask ourselves the question how it came to pass that a farmhouse should be thus inconveniently jammed in between other men's land and houses, the answer is not far to seek. It was once a frequent thing for a man to build his house on the verge of his neighbour's property, this being done to save expense in making walls. But that is not the main reason why the house marked "A" is a portion of a larger house. The main reason is that when a man died his wife and children, or other representatives, divided his buildings and land piecemeal amongst them, according to his will or the settlement which he had made of it.\* In our time, when a division of property is contemplated, the owner settles it on trust for sale, so that the beneficiaries take not actual parts, but shares in the proceeds of sale—a practice which avoids the old and inconvenient method of doling out a bay of a house to the widow and the other bays amongst the children, or otherwise dividing the property into actual parts.

The scullery and pantry of the house marked "A" are newer

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\* We must not forget that the old rule was to divide the estates of intestates equally.

than the rest of that house, and were probably added because bay 2, which was the portion allotted to a former co-parcener, was insufficient for the accommodation of a family. Fortunately, we know from written evidence that the practice was to allot single bays to widows and others as their portions, and as the bays were, in theory at all events, of uniform size, it was easy to make fair apportionments or divisions. Thus it appears from the marriage settlement in 1617 of Edmund Waterhouse, of Bradfield, and Helen, his wife, that if the wife survived the husband, and they were childless, she was to have "one bay of housing, with the chimney, being the west end of the fire-house (dwelling-house), with the chamber over the same." If children were born of the marriage, she was to have the same bay and one-third of her husband's other buildings and lands as her full dower.\* Again, in 1682, it is recorded that Thomas Jennings, senior, late of Sheffield, hardwareman, was in his lifetime seised in fee of a moiety or half part of a house in Sheffield in which Abiel Rollinson then dwelt, and also of the fourth part of a house in Sheffield where Joshua Bayle then dwelt, together with two closes called Channel Ings.† Here, then, we have a house divided into four parts, and probably consisting of bays. Had the parts been undivided shares we should have been told so. Somebody—widow, perhaps, or child—had acquired a bay (bay 2) without a fireplace in the original house at Little Hucklow, which was separated from the next bay by a wooden partition wall, and which had also a wooden wall at its north end. Thus came the necessity for making a fireplace between the "crucks" in the north gable, and substituting a stone wall for the original wooden one. That this was done is made highly probable by the fact that the "crucks" are a foot from the north wall in the chamber over the fireplace, and by the fact that a large piece has been cut out of one of them to

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\* Abstract by J. D. Leader in the "Local Notes and Queries" of the *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 1876.

† Sheffield Court Rolls.



make room for a doorway between this chamber and the chamber over the scullery. Moreover, there are old sockets or mortices in the "crucks" showing that tie-beams and angle-braces have crossed them for the purpose of strengthening the wall, which was originally a gable end or outer wall. It is very likely that the side walls, now seven feet high, were originally lower, and that the roof was thatched, as some houses in the village have been within living memory. It is even possible that the thatch extended down to the ground.

The houses marked "B" and "C" now belong to the same owner (not the owner of the house marked "A"), but have been separately occupied as long as can now be remembered. The scullery and pantry of the house marked "B" are under one of the chambers of the house marked "C." The scullery and pantry of the house marked "C" form an outshoot, with no chambers above them, and were evidently added at the time when the original house was divided into portions. To effect this division a fine stone-mullioned window of four bays, or lights, was built up, and other changes made which cannot now be traced, though the large recess in the pantry of the house marked "C" makes it likely that a window corresponding to the built-up window stood there. A modern window on the south side of the house marked "C" has been omitted from the plan.

Such an intermixture of dwellings must often have caused trouble. Disputes about rights of way, light, and air, to say nothing of questions about repairs of roofs and walls, can hardly fail to have been a source of annoyance and expense to the owners of such property. Yet one cannot but admire the ingenious way in which these three houses were made out of one. See, for example, how neatly the three pantries of the three houses, with their adjoining sculleries, are clustered or fitted together. When a man's house adjoined his neighbour's land it was difficult for him, without trespass, to rebuild his wall, to whitewash it, or repair it. Hence some property-owners in this neighbourhood have claimed what they call a

right of *ladder-stead*—i.e., a right to put a ladder on the adjoining owner's land to do repairs.

The intermixture of houses and other buildings, such as barns, is not less remarkable than the scattered or intermixed ownership in the open fields of an ancient English village, to which Seebohm and other writers have drawn attention. No feature of the mediæval land system is so puzzling and interesting as this, and various attempts have been made to explain it. Why, for example, should a man's holding have been composed, not of thirty acres in a ring fence, but of sixty strips of half an acre each lying on all sides of the township? In endeavouring to answer such a question, we ought not to separate the house from the land, but to consider them together, for in both cases the intermixture may have arisen from the division of property amongst heirs or children. When we find, as we often do, that a man is described as the owner of a single bay of a barn and a strip of land in the fields held with it, we may be sure that we have to do with a case of partition.

In 1568 a man came into the lord's court at Ecclesfield and obtained leave to inherit the sixth part of half a bovatæ of arable land and the sixth part of a messuage and certain arable lands in Ecclesfield.\* Here we have a case of minute partition, the bovatæ being split into fractions of one acre and a rood each, and the house into six parts. To this day, parts of houses in Little Hucklow belong to different owners; you find that an owner has bequeathed one part of a house to one child, and another part to another child, or else that the children have agreed to divide the house between them. To such an extent has this practice been carried that it is difficult, even yet, to get a complete house—you have to buy part of a building and get the other part if you can. At Aston, four miles off, a man has a barn in the middle of another man's

\* "Et dat domino iiijs pro licentia hereditandi sextam partem dimidiæ bovatæ terræ . . . ac sextam partem unius mesuagii ac certas terras in Ecclesfeld," etc.—Sheffield Court Rolls, in the custody of the Duke of Norfolk.





THE DIVIDED HOUSE (FROM THE SOUTH).

courtyard, with a right-of-way thereto, and he has also two fields in the middle of his neighbour's land. This is not less remarkable than the case of a single acre wedged in between two acres belonging to two other men, as we find it in the ancient open-field system.

The two chambers of the house marked "C," one of which, as I have said, extends over the scullery and pantry of the house marked "B," are separated from each other by a wooden framework made of strong beams of oak resting on a thick joist (fig. 2), with a doorway in the centre. This framework, which stands in the position of the dotted line on the plan, is far too strong to have been intended as a mere partition wall, and the sockets or mortises in the blades or side-trees show that rafters have once been fitted into them. The present roof, therefore, is not the original roof, but was substituted for an older roof laid close to the blades, the side walls being raised when the new roof was put on. Hence, as may be seen in the photograph, the present decapitated chamber windows were originally dormer windows, the chambers being contracted and low. Owing to the ruinous and dangerous state of the building I could neither photograph nor measure the framework (fig. 2), and could only make a sketch. The framework is locally known as a coupling, and is very interesting because it gives us an actual representation of what was known in the fourteenth century as a couple of syles.\*

Writing of old Scottish buildings, Jamieson says in his *Dictionary*: "Two transverse beams go from one sile-blade to the other, to prevent the siles from being pressed down by the superincumbent load, which would soon make the walls 'skail'—that is, jut outwards." The newer roof of the house marked "C" on the plan has already made the walls jut outwards to a dangerous extent.

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\* "Unam domum, vocatam le Fire-house, continentem quinque coples de syles et duo gavelforkes."—Lease, dated 1392, in Greenwell's *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis* (Surtees Soc.), p. 167. The lease was for 200 years, and the lessees undertook to repair and maintain these "syles" and "gavelforkes" during that period, and to yield them up at the end of the term in good condition.

In the fourteenth century houses were estimated by the number of gavelforks ("crucks") and couples of siles which they contained. Thus the "fire-house," or dwelling-house, mentioned in the last footnote contained five couples of siles and two gavelforks—*i.e.*, one gavelfork at each end of the building. In other words, it contained six bays, and they, we may presume, were of uniform size. It will be seen that, whilst a gavelfork, or "cruck," extends down to the ground (fig. 1), resting only on a stone, a sile rests on a tie-beam which serves as a joist for the chamber floor (fig. 2). These two kinds of coupling—*viz.*, "crucks" and siles—were often used in the same building; but "crucks" were the rule in this neighbourhood, and this is the only "couple of siles" which I have seen.

This divided house, as I have called it, may remind us of the old days when equal division of real property was the rule after intestacy.\* According to the Laws of Cnut, if a man died intestate his wife and children took the inheritance, probably following the Roman law.† And in the Laws of Cnut we have this enactment: "Where the husband dwelt without claim or contest, let the wife and children dwell in the same."‡ When, however, they continued to live in the house of the dead husband and father, they parcelled it out amongst them.

## II.—THE UNDIVIDED HOUSE.

I have now to describe another type of house, which differs essentially from those which have just been examined, and only resembles them in the fact that it consists, as they do, of a house-place, scullery, or pantry, and two chambers. Such are its present, and such were its original, contents, but the building was enlarged on the north side at a later time. This house, which belongs to me, is a colour-washed dwelling, built

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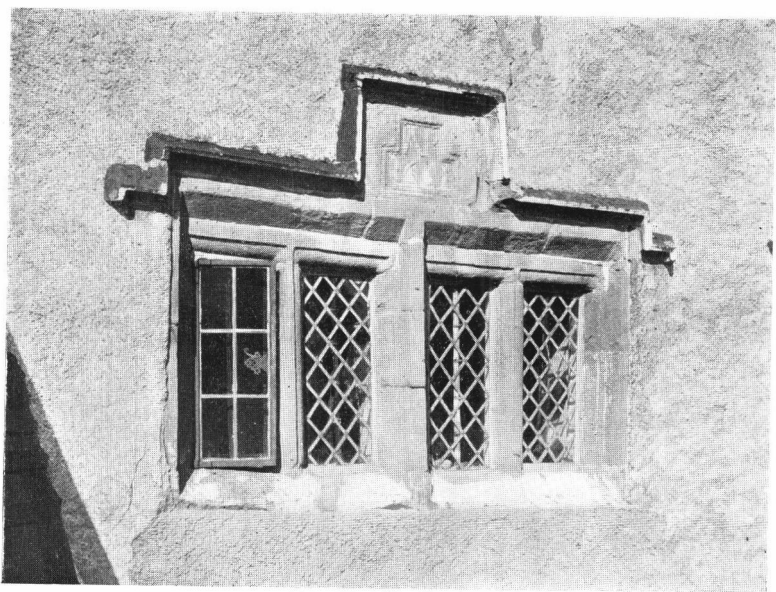
\* *Si quis paterfamilias casu aliquo sine testamento obierit, pueri inter se hereditatem equaliter dividant.*"—*Laws of William the Conqueror*, c. 33. The French version renders "pueri" as "les enfans."

† C. 71.

‡ C. 73.



THE UNDIVIDED HOUSE (FROM THE SOUTH).



LOWER EAST WINDOW OF UNDIVIDED HOUSE.



of the limestone of the district, with quoins and windows of ashlar. Its two best windows are in a broad east gable end. Half the south side is a blank wall, and part of the circumference of the stair-turret projects from that side. The building is uninjured by modern change, and nearly in the same condition as it was when it left the builder's hands. In a panel over the lower east window is the legend "A. P., 1661," the initials standing for Adam Poynton.\* For the last year or two I have used this place as a summer residence. Little as it is, we have managed to squeeze ourselves in, and we regard it as a stone tent on the moors where fresh air and open windows make us forget the luxuries of the town. Here, if anywhere, a man can lead "the simple life"!

The interest attaching to this building lies in the fact that it reproduces in the seventeenth century a type of dwelling-house which prevailed in the fourteenth century and earlier.

The plans will show the sizes of the rooms. The house-place, or hall, is entered by a door on the north side, exactly opposite the winding stair, the door being protected by a screen, formerly known as a "spere," with an inner door. The passage thus formed is here called the lobby. Above the lobby is a cupboard which serves as a receptacle for hats, etc. This room is 8 ft. high. The rafters which support the floor above it are of oak, resting on the north and south walls and on a large oak beam which crosses the room from east to west. The beam is neatly moulded, and rests on stone corbels. The south window is recessed at a height of 3 ft. 4 in. from the floor, and its stone mullions are elegantly moulded. The small west window has no mullions, and appears to be of more recent date than the other windows in the house. The "spere" also appears to be modern, as one or two of the old inhabitants say that they can remember when it was put up thirty or forty years ago. The stone projection, 1 ft. 6 in. high and 9 in. broad, next to the east jamb of the fireplace,

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\* I have had a search made at Lichfield down to 1700 for his will, but nothing was found. In 1658 Hercules Poynton and his daughter paid 1s. 8d. for Easter dues.—*Derbyshire Archaeological Journal*, XI, p. 28.

may have been used, in the days when the fireplace was open, for the same purpose as the modern hob is now used—*i.e.*, to put kettles or cooking vessels on. There is another of these projections in the house marked "C" on the plan of the divided house already described.

Adjoining the house-place is the scullery, or "bower," as we call it, entered by a doorway only 5 ft. 3 in. high. To get in you descend a step as you go through the doorway. The floor is of concrete. This room is only well lighted in the morning, and the absence of a window in the south wall makes it rather gloomy and damp. A cellar, here called a pantry, lies beneath the northern half of the floor, which is supported by a stone arch. The cellar steps are guarded by an oak framework reared on a foundation of stone. A small sink-stone, not drawn on the plan, has been fitted into the window, which is recessed at a height of 2 ft. 4 in. from the floor. Oak rafters support the floor above. This room is 7 ft. high.

The two chambers or upper rooms are approached by a winding stair, formerly known as a "vice" or "turngrees." We are so accustomed to our modern stairs, and regard them with such indifference, that we are apt to lose sight of the difficulty which the means of ascent from a lower to a higher storey presented to the old builders. At Padley Hall, near Hathersage, there was a winding stair, now removed, outside the house; at Overton Hall, near the same village, the staircase is a rectangular projection from the building, like a tower, inside which wooden steps go circling round in sets of four. At Garner House, near Bamford, the stone steps were contained in a round *case*, the outer half of which projects from the north side of the building like a segment of a round tower. There is a winding stone stair in a house at Upper Midhope, near Penistone. Examples of such stairs are now rare in English domestic architecture. The outside staircase was, however, frequent in English houses of the thirteenth century, and the upper rooms of an old Egyptian house were reached by such a contrivance.\* It is probable that many of these

\* Maspero's *Manual of Egyptian Archaeology* (English ed.), p. 11.



TOP OF STAIR IN UNDIVIDED HOUSE.

structures have been destroyed to be replaced by something more in accordance with modern taste; indeed, I have been advised by utilitarian people to knock down the stairs and put a front door there! In very many old houses the stair is, in fact, enclosed in a *case* with a door at the bottom, which you might think led into a cupboard, and sometimes a door at the top. Here and there this door has degenerated into a mere wicket or piece of lattice-work.

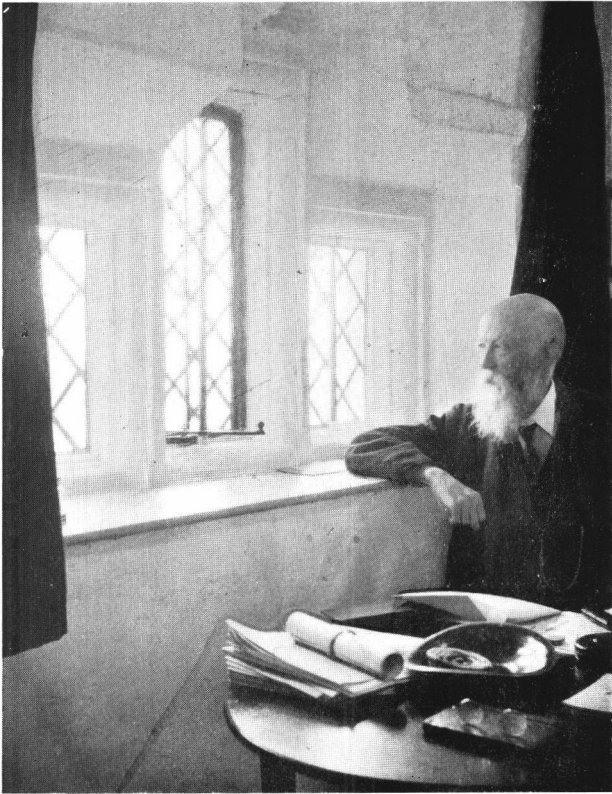
Such doors can only have been intended as a protection against intrusion, or against cold draughts. In this house at Little Hucklow there is an oak door, painted black on the outside, at the foot of the stair. It has a wooden latch and a wooden hasp, and you raise the latch by putting your finger through a hole in the door. The turret is lighted by a small latticed window, headed by a semi-circular arch. The window is splayed inwardly, and is glazed by old bottle-green glass, so that if you sleep next the "spere," and the moonlight comes through the open stair-door upon your face, you may fancy that you are lying in an old church, so quaint and weird is the scene.

The steps radiate from a newel, which, like the doorway of the staircase, is 6 ft. high. Ascending eight steps and keeping to the right you find yourself at the door, 5 ft. 3 in. high, of the east chamber, here called the house chamber, into which you enter by another step. The eighth step is made broad enough to form a small landing in front of the door of this room, and from this landing you ascend two other steps to another small landing in front of the door of the west chamber, into which you enter by another step, making the floor of the west chamber 1 ft. 3 in. higher than that of the east chamber. The last-named landing is guarded by an oak framework, now whitewashed, and it is very interesting to notice that this rude contrivance is the original or simplest form of the rails, often elaborately decorated, which guard our modern stairs and landings. There is only just room to turn round on a landing 2 ft. in length and 1 ft. 7 in. in breadth.

Nevertheless, this stair, though rather dangerous, is not altogether inconvenient, for there is room enough to carry up furniture, such as beds and chests of drawers. The cutting and fitting of these steps, from the rounded ends of which the newel is formed, must have been costly, and the builder has shown great ingenuity in adapting the stair to the two upper rooms, so that the one could be entered without going through the other. It is in such work that the character of the house appears. The owner of such an appendage to a house would naturally regard it with some pride, for a mere ladder was a sign of poverty and rusticity, as when the men of Totley, in this county, taunted their neighbours of Dore by saying :

Up a ladder and down a wall,  
A penny loaf will serve you all.

The doorway of the east chamber, here called the kitchen chamber, is 5 ft. high. The height of this chamber, measured to the place where the rafters spring from the walls, is 7 ft. 9 in. ; to the ridge-piece it is 12 ft. 2 in. It is lighted by a beautiful window in massive stonework of three lights, the central light being exactly a foot higher than the others. The recess of the window is 2 ft. 11 in. from the floor. There is no fireplace in this room, and it can only be ventilated by opening the window and door. As both the upper rooms were insufficiently lighted by the old windows, I have had two "glass slates" put in the roof of the east room, and three in that of the west room. These take the place of ordinary slates, and are fixed between the rafters. Hence they do not disfigure the building, and make the interior brighter, drier, and healthier. The practice may be recommended to all occupants of old houses with small windows and open roofs. The flue of the fireplace in the hall projects 2 ft. from the wall of the room above, and tapers on all sides upwards. It is of stone, and not of wood, as some old flues of this period are, but so thin and porous that the smoke of the fire below colours it like a meerschaum pipe. You may whitewash it as often as you like, it still turns brown. The height of the west



UPPER EAST WINDOW OF UNDIVIDED HOUSE.

chamber, measured to the place where the rafters spring from the walls, is 6 ft. 7 in.; to the ridge-piece it is 10 ft. 7 in. The recess of the window is 2 ft. 1 in. from the floor; the lintel of the window is 1 ft. 3 in. from the rafters. The fireplace was originally open; it is not in the middle of the wall, but placed a little to the north, so that the flue may escape the ridge-piece. The timbers which support the spars of the open roofs of the two chambers are oak trees, of irregular shape, roughly squared by the adze, and now whitewashed. The thickest of them has a circumference of 42 in. Adjoining the north side of the house are two apartments, now roofless, the larger one being still called the weaving-room. This room has a fireplace of good ashlar stone, with an overhanging mantelpiece and moulded jambs. Near the fireplace a bake-stone stood. The room was lighted by three small windows, now built up, and has a door in its east wall. An aged woman who lived in this house in childhood remembers a loom and two spinning-wheels in this weaving-room. She remembers, too, a printed song nailed to the loom, which a woman sang as she wove. It began:

When first from sea I landed  
 I had a roving mind;  
 Undaunted then I rambled  
 My true love for to find.

Her bare neck was shaded  
 With her long raven hair;  
 And they called her pretty Susan,  
 The pride of Kildare.

Addison, in *The Spectator* (No. 85), mentions the printed papers which, in his time, were pasted on the walls of country houses, one of these being the old ballad of "The Two Children in the Wood."

The apartment to the north of the weaving-room is said to have been a bakehouse, and it had a window, now built up, on its west side. These two apartments had a lean-to roof sloping to the east. The masonry of these buildings differs from that of the older part of the house; there are no grit-

stone quoins, and the stonework of the windows is plain and unmoulded. Moreover, the doorway between the hall and weaving-room is only 2 ft. wide; an original doorway would probably have been made wider by setting the fireplace more to the east. There is no doubt that these two apartments on the north side are comparatively modern additions. This is proved not only by the style of building, but by the fact that Adam Poynton only paid tax on *two* hearths.

The small building at the south-east corner of the house, now used as a coal-place, is a later addition, and was intended for what is here called a pig-spot. It is only shown in the photograph. The word "spot" is used in this neighbourhood as the name of any small outbuilding—*e.g.*, a calf-spot, a hen-spot. At the bottom of the two little crofts on the south side of the house is an old barn which formerly had other buildings on either side of it. Over the south door of the barn is an arched lintel, and on it the figures 1619 are cut. This stone has been removed from some other building, now destroyed.

It does not seem to have occurred to the builder of this house that a fireplace in an upper room could have been erected most conveniently over the fireplace in the room below, so that one chimney-stack would suffice for both. The fireplace in the chamber over the hall is formed in the wall, 2 ft. 8 in. thick, which divides the building into two unequal parts, and extends from the floor of the cellar to the ridge-piece. This is the thickest wall in the house. Such an arrangement involved an unnecessary loss of space as well as expenditure of money; to find room for a chimney the partition wall was made six inches thicker than the outer walls. Originally both the fireplaces were open—that is to say, a fire of wood or pit-coal burnt on the hearth-stones.

There are eight holes in the walls, which were formerly used as repositories for keeping things.\* Three of these holes are in the room over the hall—one at the head of the winding

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\* In Percivall's *Spanish Dictionarie*, 1591, we have: "*Alhazéna*, a hole in a wal to set things in, an Ambrie."



stair, one in the hall, and three in the kitchen. These rectangular apertures are of various sizes, the largest being about 1 ft. 6 in. square; the depth is about 1 ft. In an old house near Sheffield one of such holes is filled by a small oak cupboard with figures carved on the door. Similar holes in walls, with arched tops, resembling the so-called *piscinæ* of churches, are found in houses of the thirteenth century. One of these at Stoke Say is near the jamb of the fireplace in the solar,\* just as here there is a hole near the jamb of the fireplace in the room over the hall.

The house is built of the limestone of the district, except that the corner stones, the stonework of the windows and fireplaces, and the corbels which hold beams are of ashlar, or "greatstone," as it is called in the neighbourhood. The stairs are, however, of limestone, much worn by use. The outer walls are rough-casted with grey plaster, and until late years have been whitewashed; but the stonework of the windows has been coloured light red, and the date and initials over the lower east window blue. That these red and blue colours were laid on when the house was built is rendered probable by the fact that they are the lowest of numerous layers that have been scraped off. The south windows are now coloured yellow, as many others in the village are, the custom being to renew these decorations yearly at the wakes. The inside walls have been coloured by a deep tint of archil; they are now whitewashed. Our English ancestors disliked bare stones, and they coloured them, often with gaudy hues. I have seen the stone mullions of old houses in Yorkshire coloured by archil on the outside. Few objects in a landscape are more beautiful than an old whitewashed cottage glistening in the morning or evening sun.

On removing the plaster or whitewash from the inner parts of the window-jamb certain marks were found. In the east chamber on the south side of the window a pair of cross-scythes is incised, with the blades turned outwardly.

On each of the stones forming the window-jamb of the

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\* T. Hudson Turner's *Domestic Architecture in England*, 1851, p. 160.

north side is also a pair of cross scythes, with the blades turned inwardly. The handles of the scythes are about three inches in length. Taverns have often been called "Cross Scythes." On the west jamb of the south window in the hall is a representation of the swastika. No marks of this kind have been discovered in other parts of the house; they are only found on the jambs of the upper east window and the lower south window, and they are in such a position that the light of the morning and mid-day sun would fall upon them. In Derbyshire the sign of the cross is still made to attract the sun. Thus it is said that "if it rains hard and you wish it to be fine, lay two straws across and the rain will cease.\* Moreover, it is well-known that the swastika was intended to be a representation of the sun. It may be, therefore, that these marks are not symbols used by masons to distinguish their own work, but magical devices intended to attract sun and light to the building.

I have now to compare this house at Little Hucklow with a much larger and much older house called Padley Hall, near Hathersage. The comparison will show that the two houses, separated as they are in time by an interval of perhaps three hundred years, are examples of the same type of building, and closely resemble each other.

1. In the first place each house consists of a larger and a smaller room on the ground floor with corresponding rooms above.†

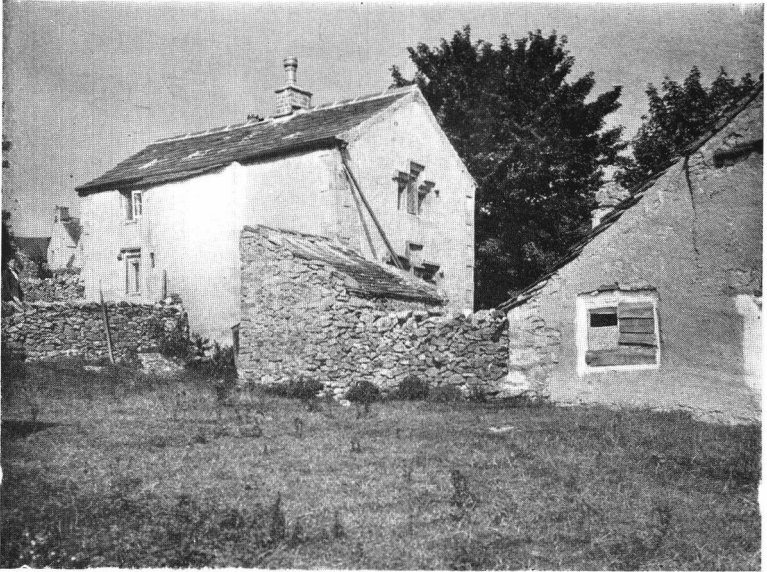
2. In both houses the best windows are in the east gable end, one in the upper room, and one in the lower. In the photograph the east window of the lower east room at Padley is concealed from view.

3. If the photographs of the two houses, printed on the same page, be compared, it will be seen that at Padley as well as at Little Hucklow a winding stair, built against the wall,

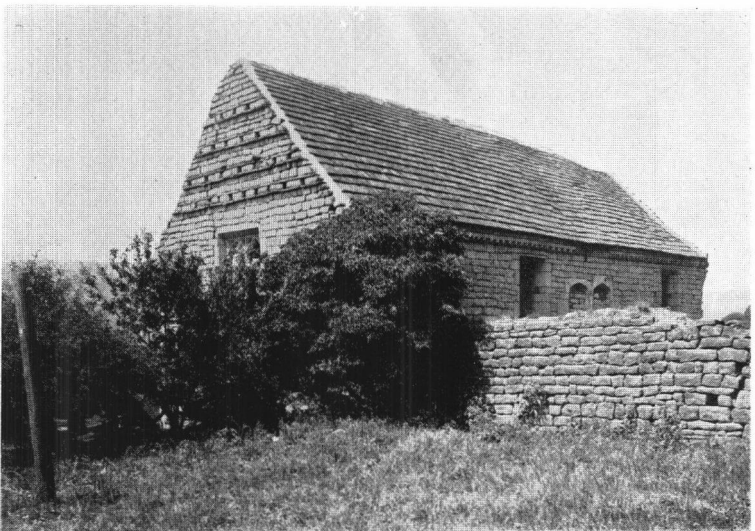
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\* Addy's *Household Tales, etc.*, p. 85.

† I have given plans of the house at Padley in *Evolution of the English House*, pp. 136, 141.



HOUSE AT LITTLE HUCKLOW (FROM THE SOUTH).



PADLEY HALL (FROM THE NORTH-EAST).

once led to the upper rooms and served them both. At Padley the winding stair has been removed, but the two doorways at its summit, one for each upper room, will be seen in the photograph, and it will also be seen that one doorway is higher than the other, as at Little Hucklow. If a portion of the turret at Little Hucklow were removed, so as to exhibit a section, two doorways would also be seen, one higher than the other. At Padley, as at Little Hucklow, the floor of one upper room is higher than the other.

4. In each house the winding stair is exactly opposite the entrance, and in each house the entrance is in one of the long sides.

5. In both houses there is a fireplace in each of the two larger rooms, and none in the smaller.

In a word, the house at Little Hucklow is a later, plainer, and diminished copy of the house at Padley—that is to say, both houses belong to the same type. We may call it the “hall-and-bower” type.

The land on the south boundary of my house belongs to one man, and that on the west boundary to another man, so that, having a bit of land on the north and east sides, I am better off than the owner of the house marked “A,” who has no land on any side. Land adjoining a house is here called “privilege,” and perhaps I ought to consider myself lucky in having such an advantage on two sides, even though my neighbours tell me that my privilege was formerly stolen from the village green.

In old times there were in England houses which were not divisible amongst co-heirs. Bracton, who died in 1268, has told us that when several co-heirs were entitled to a messuage it was to be divided into shares, unless they could agree that one should take the whole and pay compensation to the rest. Even when the property was held by military tenure, “a hall,” he tells us, “is sometimes divided into two or more parts, and sometimes a chamber is divided from the hall, and so with regard to the several buildings (*domus*) in the court

(*curia*).” But as regards the larger houses held by military tenure, he says that the capital mansions of a county, or barony, castles, and other edifices, were not divisible.\* They followed the rule of primogeniture.

Now, with regard to the hall at Padley, it appears that in 1451 Robert Eyre, Esq., held it of John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, by the service of the fortieth part of a knight's fee, and by two reasonable aids.† It was, therefore, held by military tenure, and from its size, the character of its architecture, and its strength, we may presume that it was not divisible. At all events, no signs of partition can be discovered in the existing building. It seems to have been no more divisible than a castle was. I do not, of course, suggest that the house at Little Hucklow was held by military tenure—indeed, such tenures were abolished in the very year when it was built. But it is evident that the two houses which I have compared belong to one and the same type, the similarity being due to imitation.

The plans have been drawn by me and copied by Mr. J. R. Wigfull, of Sheffield, architect, who is not responsible for their accuracy. Mr. Wigfull has also kindly supplied one of the photographs.

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\* Bracton, *De Legibus, etc.*, ed. Sir Travers Twiss, i., p. 602 *seq.*

† MS. *Feodarium* in the custody of the Duke of Norfolk.